



Bartholomew County Coroner's Office

2022 Report

BCCO gets many requests for data, mostly regarding drug overdoses, suicides, motor vehicle accidents and child deaths, including infant mortality. The purpose of this report is to provide data to those who work to reduce preventable deaths.

Indiana coroners do not investigate all deaths. Most deaths are natural in manner and certified by the attending physician. Coroners have jurisdiction over all homicides, suicides, and accidents. In addition, coroners investigate natural deaths when the death was sudden and unexpected, unwitnessed, or suspicious, or if the decedent did not have a physician.

Deaths are certified in the county where the death occurs, not the decedent's county of residence. Thus, patients who were transported to Indianapolis hospitals prior to death are not included in this report. Likewise, patients transported from nearby communities and die in Columbus are included in Bartholomew County's numbers. This may explain differences between numbers provided by our office and other resources who tally deaths by county of residence.

Manner of Death

Manner of death categorizes the circumstances surrounding the cause of death. All deaths are classified in one of five categories:

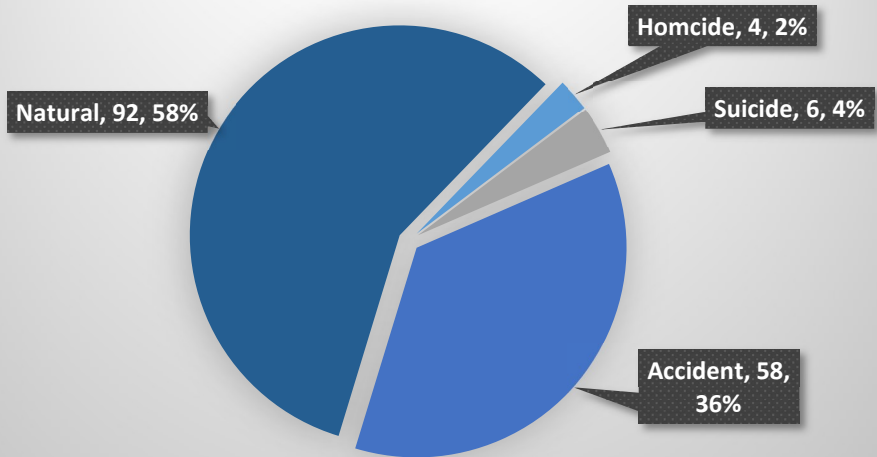
- Homicide*
- Suicide
- Accident
- Natural
- Undetermined

In 2022, BCCO investigated 160 cases. 92 of those cases were ruled natural, 58 accident, 6 suicide and 4 homicide.

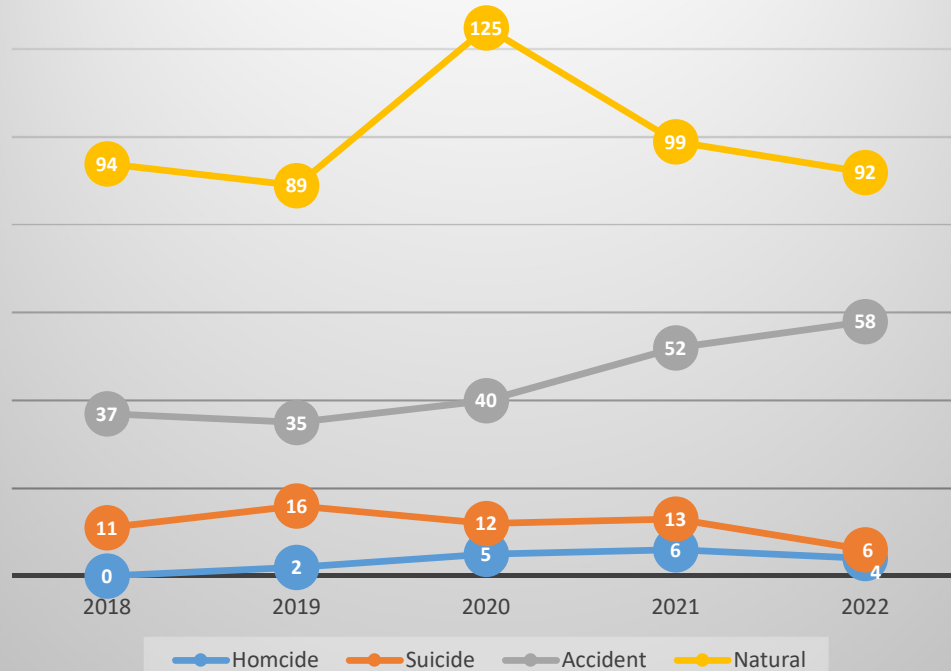
Deaths ruled accidental included nine motor vehicle accidents and 39 drug overdoses.

**For medico-legal purposes, homicide is the killing of one human being by another; it does not consider intent.*

2022 Manner of Death

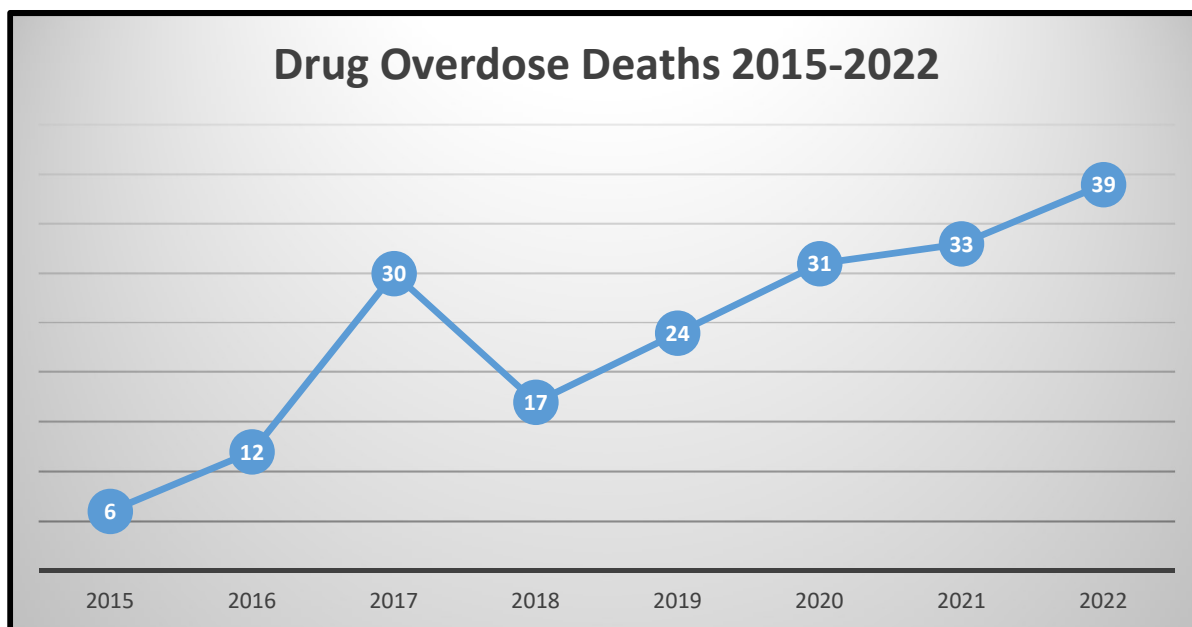


5-Year Manner of Death



Drug Overdose

BCSO investigated 39 drug overdose deaths in 2020. This is the highest number on record, and the fourth continuous annual increase. The cases involved 21 males and 18 females. Two of the cases were ruled suicide, with the remaining 29 cases ruled accidental.



In Bartholomew County, comprehensive toxicology testing is ordered on all suspected overdoses as a routine part of the investigation. Very few overdose deaths involve a single drug; in 2022, there were 12 cases where a single drug (including analogs and metabolites) was responsible for a death.

The most common drug involved in overdose cases was fentanyl, including fentanyl analogs. Fentanyls were documented in 27 of the 39 cases. Sixteen of the decedents tested positive for both methamphetamine and fentanyl.

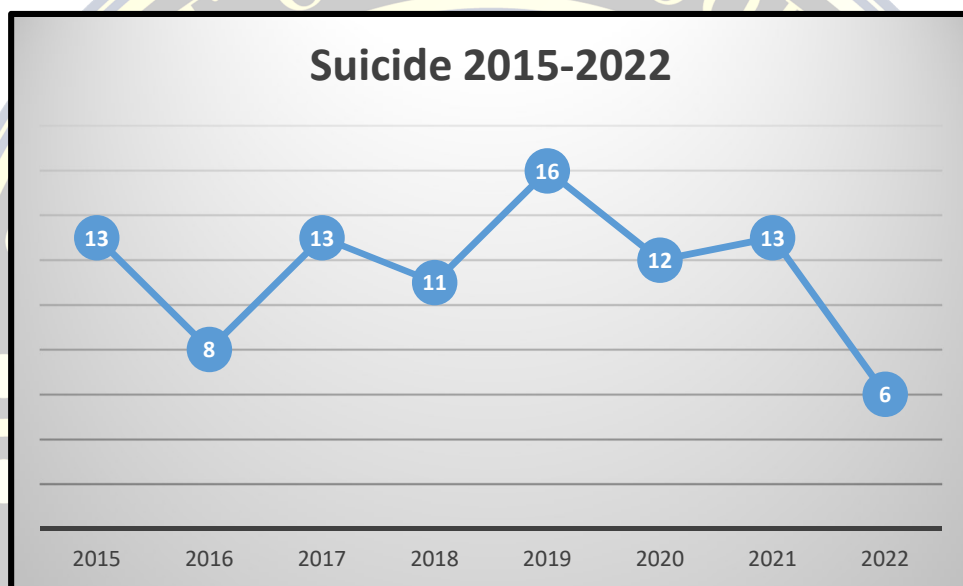
The second most common drug seen was methamphetamine, found in 26 cases. In 15 of the year's cases, both fentanyl and methamphetamine contributed to the death.

The most common drug observed beyond methamphetamine and the fentanyls was THC, in 10 cases. Gabapentin, a prescription anticonvulsant often used to treat neuropathic pain, was present in six cases.

We have received inquiries about deaths caused by xylazine, an animal tranquilizer not approved for use in humans. Xylazine is sometimes used as a cutting agent in drugs such as fentanyl. Bartholomew County has seen it one time each year, 2019-2022, each case also involving fentanyl. Both drugs can contribute to fatal respiratory depression.

Suicide

BCCO investigated six suicide deaths in 2022, down significantly from 13 in 2021. All but one involved a firearm.



The 115 suicide deaths from 2013-2022 were examined. The deaths included 89 males and 26 females. Ages ranged from 13 to 98 years old. The average age was 45.7 years.

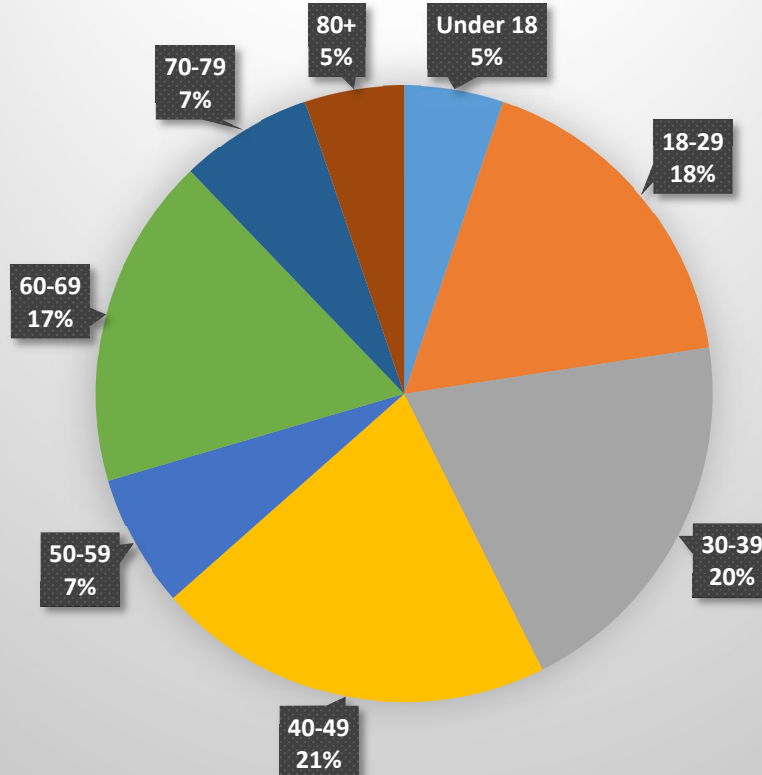
The most common means of suicide was gunshot wound (61 cases), followed by hanging (30 cases). Other means included drug overdose, asphyxiation (example carbon monoxide poisoning), stabbing, and blunt force trauma.

The largest suicide age group was 40-49 years old. The groups "Over 80" and "Under 18" each represented 5% of the total.

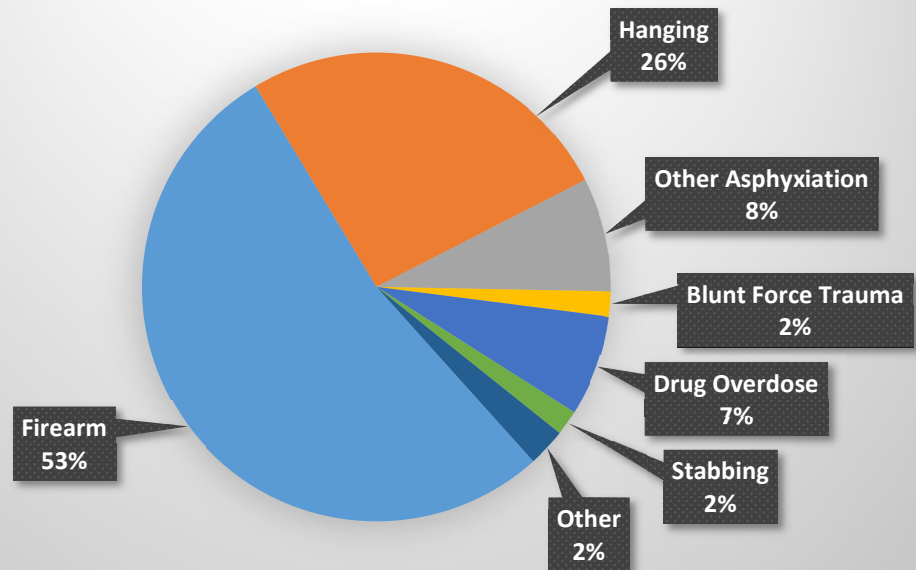
Indiana's suicide prevention resources toolkit can be located at

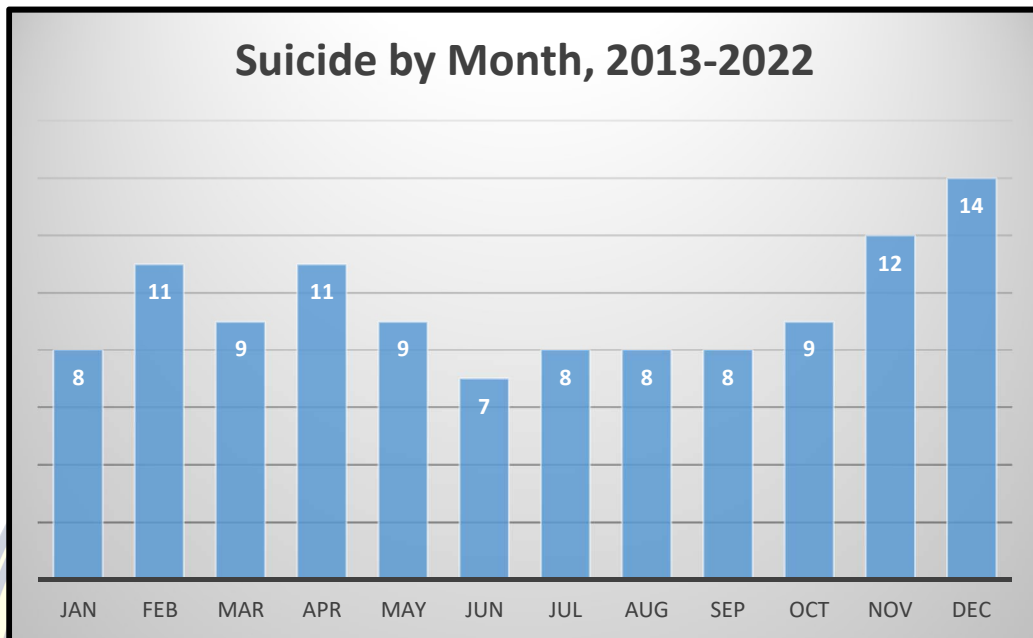
<https://www.in.gov/health/cfr/overdose-fatality-review/indiana-suicide-prevention-resources-toolkit/>

Suicide by Age Group, 2013-2022



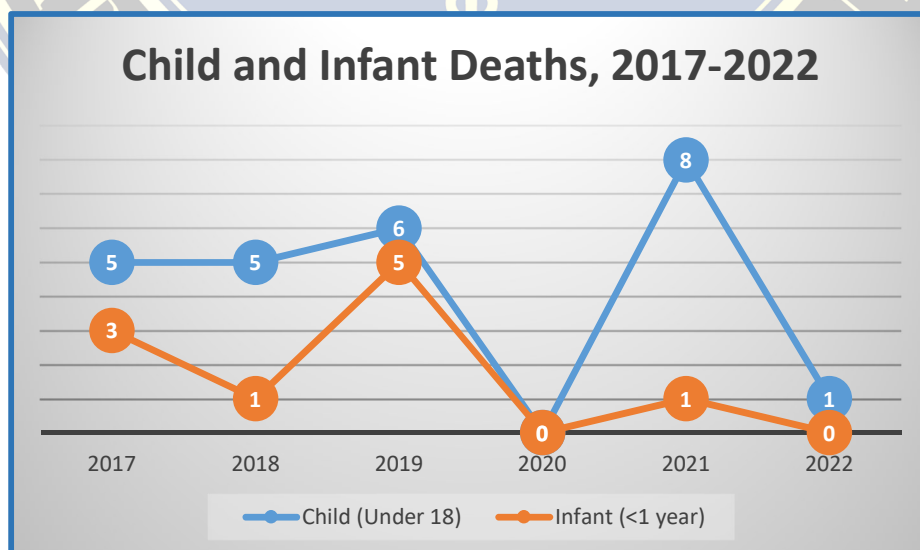
Suicide Method, 2017-2022





Child Deaths

From 2017-2022, BCCO investigated 25 child deaths (individuals under 18- years of age). Of those, 10 were infants (under one year of age). BCCO participates in Bartholomew County's Child Fatality Review Team, a multidisciplinary, professional team that conducts a comprehensive, in-depth review of a child's death and the circumstances and risk factors involved, and then seek to understand how and why the child died so that future injury and death can be prevented.



In presenting the foregoing statistics, the staff of the coroner's office recognizes that each number represents a unique human life. We extend our condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have died. It is our hope that fewer families will come to experience the same grief by our sharing statistical data to assist those who work to reduce preventable deaths.

The Bartholomew County Coroner's Office participates in the [Indiana Violent Death Reporting System](#). The program is administered by the State Department of Health's Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It aims to improve the planning, implementation, and evaluation of violence prevention programs.

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